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A GREEK PAPYRUS AND TWO MUMMY LABELS FROM DURHAM, U.K.

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During a visit to the Oriental Museum at Durham (organized as part of the program of the Dakhleh Oasis Project Conference at Durham University [July 5-9, 1994]) I came across a Greek papyrus and two mummy labels which are apparently still unpublished. I am very grateful to Mr. John Ruffle (Keeper of the Oriental Museum) for his kind permission to publish these documents and to Mrs. Janet Starkey (Recorder at the Museum) for her kind help in making the objects available to me and for checking the museum's archives. I am also very grateful to my colleagues S. Vleeming (Leiden), who provided me with a transcript of the Demotic part of the mummy label published below as text 'b.2', and J.D. Thomas (Durham) who kindly checked a problematical passage in the papyrus, provided the correct suggestion for its reading (cf. l. 2 n.) and corrected a first version of this article.

(a) The Papyrus

Durham, Oriental Museum inv. # 1978.8. H. 9.5 x W. 14 cm. Margin at the bottom 2.5 cm. Writing across the fibers. Verso empty. The papyrus was acquired by the Museum in 1978.

Ptel, Oxy. Nome

5th century A.D.

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | Π(αρά) Ἀμμωνίου πρεσβυτέρω ἐποικίου Πτέλ | Tafel IX |
| 2 | ᾽Ωρίων καὶ Ἀφοῦς υἱοῖς χαίρειν. Σιμίου χάριν ὧν | |
| 3 | ἔσχον παρ' ὑμῶν ἀπὸ τιμῆς σιππίων· τὸ πρῶτον | |
| 4 | ἔσχον παρ' ὑμῶν ἀργυρίου (τάλαντα) Ἀ/ , τὸ δεύτερον | |
| 5 | ἀργυρίου τάλαντα (τάλαντα) Ἀ/ , τὸ τρίτον παρὰ ᾽Ωρίων | |
| 6 | μόνος ἀργυρίου (τάλ.) ρ/ μόνας. καὶ τῇ γυνεὲ μου (τάλ.) χ' | |
| 7 | Νῦν οὖν ἄρτι δὸς τῷ ἀδελφῷ ᾽Θερμοῦθις μου Σαραποδώ- | |
| 8 | ρου τὰς λυπαστίσας παρ' ὑμῶν ἀργυρ(ί)ου | |
| 9 | τάλαντα (τάλ.) χλ'. Φαῶφι ἰδ. | |
| 10 | Ἑρρωσθαι {σε} εὐχομαι ὑμᾶς πολλοῖς χρόνοις. | |

1 πρεσβυτέρου 2 ᾽Ωρίωνι, ᾽Αποῦτι, υἱοῖς (Pap. υἱοῖς), σημείου 5 ᾽Ωρίωνος 6 μόνου, μόνα, γυναικί 6 2nd half of line (after μόνας) seems to have been added as an afterthought (squeezed in between il. 5 and 7), with the name Θερμοῦθις written as a further addition between il. 6 and 7; some letters seem to have been retraced 7-8 Σαραποδώρω (-οδω- ex α corr.) 8 τὰ (τ- ex α corr.). λοιπασθέντα, ἀργυρίου

“From Ammonios, priest of the village of Ptel, to Horion and Aphous, sons, greetings. As proof of what I received from you from the price of hemp: the first time I received from you 1900 tal. of silver, the second time 1000 talents of silver, the third time from only Horion 100 tal. of silver in total. Now then give right away to my brother Sarapodoros the remaining 630 talents from (owed by) you, and to my wife Thermouthis 600 tal. Phaophi 14. I pray for your health (remaining) for many years.”

Apart from the mention of a priest only palaeographical criteria can be used for dating this text; the type of handwriting is compatible with a 5th-century date and this matches with what we know already about the village of Ptel (cf. l. 1n.). The document contains a short notification by a priest Ammonios to two ‘sons’, Aphous and Horion, about money owed after a transaction concerning the price of hemp. Apparently amounts of 1900 + 1000 + 100 = 3000 talents had been paid by Aphous and/or Horion to Ammonios already in three instalments (ll. 3-6), while other amounts were still to be paid by them, i.e. 630 Tal. to Ammonios' 'brother' Sarapodoros (ll. 7-9) and 600 Tal. to Ammonios' wife Thermouthis

(cf., however, the note to 11. 6-8) = 1230 talents; the total amount of money involved in the sale of hemp (cf. ἀπὸ τιμῆς σιππίων) was, therefore, 4230 tal., but it is unknown how much hemp was delivered for this amount. Fifth-century prices of hemp seem to be lacking (P.Oxy. LI 3628-3633 give no price indication for this product) and R.S. Bagnall (*Currency and Inflation in 4th Century Egypt* 69) mentions only one late-4th century document, P.Oxy. XLVIII 3429 (from ca. 375-385 A.D.), stating the price of hemp to be at 350 T./bundle. In P.Rain.Cent. 86 (A.D. 381) a delivery of 5 bundles (at 5 *mnā* each) of hemp is promised as monthly interest for a loan of 5 solidi. For the use of hemp according to the papyri, cf. E. Wipszycka, *L'industrie textile dans l'Egypte romaine*.

1. For the village of Ptel in the Oxyrhynchite Nome cf. A. Calderini - S. Daris, *Dizionario Geografico* IV 200 and P. Pruneti, *I centri abitati dell'Ossirinichite* 156 (where add P.Oxy. L 3585.4). Thus far it has been mentioned only in three 5th-century documents¹ and this papyrus yields a fourth attestation, again (probably) from the same century. Its precise location within the Oxyrhynchite nome is unknown. A priest Ammonios in the village is also not known.
2. It remains to be seen whether Horion and Aphous really were 'sons' of the priest Ammonios (apparently married, cf. l. 6) in the physical sense of the word; maybe they were members of his flock, hence 'spiritual' sons.
I owe the decipherment of the word before χάριν ὦν to J.D. Thomas (Durham) who came up with the absolutely convincing suggestion to read σιμίου and to understand this as a misspelling of σημείου; he refers to SB VI 9415 (17).14 and XVI 12265.3 where the same phrasing σημείου χάριν found. As Thomas remarks, it must surely be translated here as 'As proof of what I received (ὦν ἔσχον) from you from the price of hemp (ἀπὸ τιμῆς σιππίων), etc.'. Cf. also H.C. Youtie in ZPE 6 (1970) 105-116 = Scriptiunculae II 963-975.
- 6-8. In the open space after μόνας (l. 6) Ammonios inserted as a kind of afterthought:
καὶ τῇ γυνεὶ μου (τάλ.) χ'
Θερμοῦθις,
in my view intended to go with δὲ τῷ ἀδελφῷ μου Σαραποδώρου (l. 7-8); I think (cf. the many Byzantine tax receipts with μόνας closing off the amount actually paid) that μόνας probably closed off the third payment of 100 talents. One might, however, prefer to assume that in the third payment (11. 5-6) Horion alone paid only 100 talents to Ammonios himself, and an extra 600 talents to his wife.
8. Elsewhere (cf. ll. 4, 5, 6) Ammonios writes the expected form ἀργυρίου, only here αργυρου. In general it is not common to find ἀργύρου τάλαντα instead of ἀργυρίου τάλαντα. So αργυρου is probably a mistake for ἀργυρ(ί)ου.
9. It is worth noticing that there is no precise indication of the date of the document either by an Oxyrhynchite era year or an indiction year; Phaophi 14 = 11/12.x.
10. Apparently Ammonios started writing the common salutation in the singular form (σε); then he realized that he was addressing two persons and added the plural personal noun ὑμᾶς above the line; he did so, however, without cancelling σε and without putting ὑμᾶς at the expected place, i.e. before εὔχομαι.

(b) The Mummy Labels

There is a considerable amount of literature concerning mummy labels; a most useful introduction into the subject (with extensive further bibliography) is given by J. Quaegebeur in Pap.Lugd.Bat. XIX, pp. 232-259.

(1) Mummy Tag, Inv. Wel(come collection) 136. H. 3.6 x W. 9.2 cm. Writing parallel with the grain of the wood. Verso empty. 2nd or 3rd century A.D.

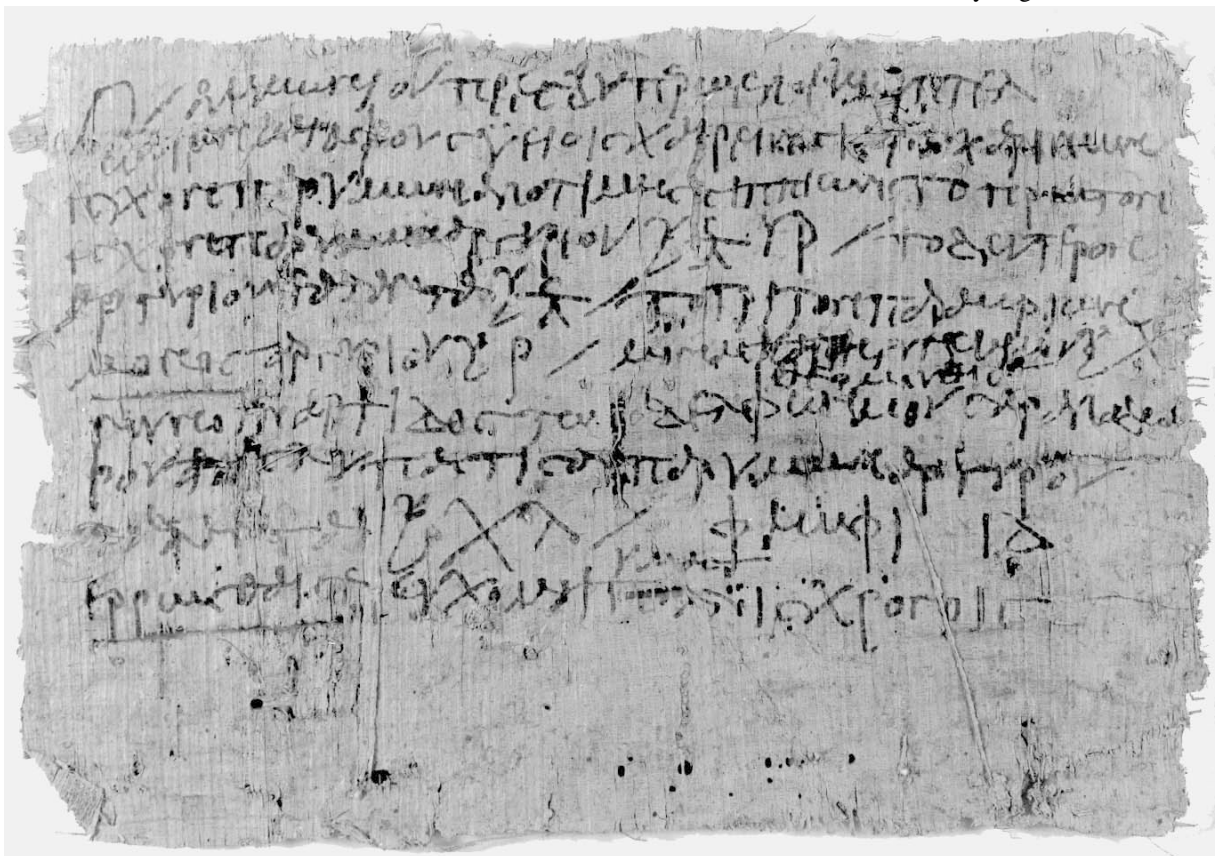
- 1 Ἀπλωνία
- 2 γυνὴ Ἀσκλᾶ-
- 3 τρεῖς εἰς Ἑρμῶντιν.

1 Ἀπολλωνία 2-3 Ἀσκλᾶτος (ασκλα-: λ ex α) 3 Ἑρμῶντιν

¹ As SB XII 10808 (ed. princ.: provenance unknown) mentions this village in l. 3, the papyrus may be attributed with P. Pruneti (*loc.cit.*) to the Oxyrhynchite nome; if this attribution is correct, the bishop John mentioned there in ll. 1-2 may be a 5th-century bishop of Oxyrhynchus who is further unknown (for names of bishops mentioned in documentation from Byzantine Egypt cf. ZPE 100 [1994] 283-318, for Oxyrhynchus esp. 288-89 and 303-04). Cf. now also A. Papaconstantinou in ZPE 111 (1996) 171-173.



Mummy Tag, inv. N 2004



Durham, Oriental Museum inv. # 1978.8